

have served this country overseas. Now, over 165,000 Americans have served in over 130 countries throughout the world, and they have come here to our Nation's capital to celebrate the anniversary of Peace Corps, which is 40 + 1 years old. We were going to have the 40th anniversary celebration last year, but 9-11 pushed it off to this year, so it is 40 plus one.

I had the honor yesterday of introducing a bill about the Peace Corps, H.R. 4979. It authorizes appropriations for the Peace Corps to double the number of volunteers in five years; it restates the independence of the Peace Corps; it reports to Congress on new initiatives and security for Peace Corps volunteers; it makes a commitment to recruit and place Peace Corps volunteers in countries where they could help promote mutual understanding, particularly in areas with substantial Muslim populations; it develops training programs for Peace Corps volunteers in areas of education and prevention of AIDS; it streamlines and empowers the Peace Corps Advisory Council and creates a fund to promote the work of returned Peace Corps volunteers in fulfilling the goals of the Peace Corps and in facilitating the world-wide support of peace.

I ask Members of Congress who are interested in this to cosponsor this great piece of legislation.

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE SILVER MARKET

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for legislation to expand the silver market, which is being introduced by my good friends, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. OTTER).

I am a proud cosponsor of this bill, which calls for the extending of production of the popular American eagle silver bullion coins. These coins were first minted in 1986 from a stockpile of silver held over since the Second World War. They became an instantly popular coin, and now the stockpile has almost run out. This bill will allow the U.S. Mint to buy silver on the open market, to continue the production of these patriotic coins. It also encourages the purchase of domestically mined silver, providing a great new market for silver mines, especially those in Nevada, the Silver State.

I thank my colleagues, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. OTTER) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON), for their leadership on this bill, and encourage all of my colleagues to support this patriotic coin program.

LET US NOT FORGET OUR SENIORS AND THEIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG NEEDS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we leave this weekend to go home to our districts, we are still burdened by the inertia of this Congress in dealing with a very serious issue, and that is, of course, the needs of the greatest generation, our grandparents and our parents.

We have, for the last 4 years, promised these hardworking Americans a Medicare prescription drug benefit. I wish we could do this in a bipartisan way, Mr. Speaker. I wish we could put forward a bill that really did respond to the needs of our senior citizens so they would not have to make the choices of paying rent and buying food or eliminating their prescription drugs.

The Democrats have a proposal that is clear: a \$25 premium; the ability to assist those who cannot afford to pay for their prescription drugs; and a prescription drug policy that applies to all of their medical providers, so that two individuals who are a couple, who have worked and contributed to this Nation, will not suffer anymore.

It seems to me a crisis and a shame that we have a Republican bill that does nothing but play to the pharmaceutical industry. Let us work together for the Greatest Generation, to help our parents to live a good quality of life.

HONORING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAMPTON COUNTY WATERMELON FESTIVAL

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the 6th anniversary of the Hampton County Watermelon Festival Parade. This parade will begin at 10 a.m. in Varnville, and I am honored to be participating once again in this annual event.

The theme for this year's festival is "Patriotism, the Spirit of America." Last year, according to the South Carolina State Troopers, approximately 50,000 spectators attended the festival.

Mr. Speaker, this annual watermelon festival parade honors the dedication and sacrifices made by our farmers throughout South Carolina, who work so hard to feed so many Americans. Our farmers support rural economies and continue a tradition that has existed for centuries in America.

I would like to commend the efforts of this year's festival chairman, Hugh Gray and vice-chairman, Susan Hatcher, along with parade chairmen Rodger Roberts and Otis Harrison; Mrs. Mary Ellen Bowers, the Estill congressional

district office director; as well as the efforts of the South Carolina Farm Bureau and Ag First Farm Credit Bank in helping to feed America and make our country strong.

NEXT WEEK'S INADEQUATE REPUBLICAN PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT PLAN FOR SENIORS

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, next week is going to be a very interesting week. Probably the major issue that faces this Congress, that is, what do we do about prescription drugs for senior citizens, will be dealt with.

The Republicans have put a bill out here which is absolutely inadequate. Everybody knows it. The newspapers have reported that. It is clear to anybody who has looked at the data. Yet when the Democrats put something forward, they say that ours costs too much.

Now, some of us, many of us, said back in March when we passed \$1.7 trillion worth of tax cuts that the day is going to come when we are not going to have the money to do this right. So now we have a bill which is going to come out here. It will pass, no one here has any doubt about that, because we know we have to have the press release: House Republicans Deal With Drug Problems for Seniors, or something like that.

But the fact is that the bill will not do what is necessary. It is a real shame that Members would rather cut taxes than take care of their mothers and fathers.

MORE GOODS IN STORES TO BE MADE IN AMERICA

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, on 9-11 I stood here and made a speech about the overvalued dollar and its bad effect on our trade, especially the textile industry. Then came the vicious attack. Since that time, the President and the House leadership have promised to aid our beleaguered industry and have delivered on those promises. But in the long run, the weakening dollar will provide immediate aid in our ability to compete, to compete in the world market in textiles and steel and other important sectors of our economy. Our retail prices will increase; but now, more goods in the stores will be made in America.